

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
April 29 - May 5, 2011

1. [Clinton Discusses U.S. Efforts to End Violence in Libya](#) (05-05-2011)
 2. [Pentagon Report Cites Tangible Progress in Afghan Security](#) (05-03-2011)
 3. [Fact Sheet: Phased Adaptive Approach to European Missile Defense](#) (05-03-2011)
 4. [Fact Sheet: U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense Site in Romania](#) (05-03-2011)
 5. [Obama Calls Death of bin Laden an Act of Justice](#) (05-02-2011)
 6. [U.S. Muslims React to bin Laden's Death, Stand Against Terrorism](#) (05-02-2011)
 7. [Briefing by Senior Officials on Killing of Osama bin Laden](#) (05-02-2011)
-

1. [Clinton Discusses U.S. Efforts to End Violence in Libya](#) (05-05-2011)

By M. Scott Bortot
Staff Writer

Washington — At a press conference with Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini in Rome, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the United States is working with its allies to end violence in Libya, Syria and Afghanistan.

Clinton, in Rome to attend the second meeting of the Contact Group on Libya, said the United States and Italy are working together to end the fighting in Libya.

“Today, we will be discussing in depth how better to increase the pressure on [Libyan leader Muammar] Qadhafi and those around him diplomatically, politically, economically, how we can bring about the outcome that the people of Libya and the international community seek — an end to the violence against civilians, and the beginning of a democratic transition to a better future,” Clinton said.

The United States and other members of the Contact Group are meeting in Rome with representatives of the Libyan Transitional National Council to discuss further assistance from the international community.

“I think it’s fair to say that there’s been an enormously effective effort that has been led by the Contact Group. Individual nations have certainly made their contributions,” Clinton said. “The United Nations, which will be represented here, is working very hard on the humanitarian relief side. I think that we have made a number of important commitments.”

The United States and Italy called for an immediate end to the violence used by the Syrian government against its citizens, who are calling for democracy.

“The United States has announced targeted sanctions against key individuals and entities that have engaged in grave abuses in Syria,” Clinton said, adding that Italy has called for the European Union to pursue sanctions against Syria. “Together, we have to show the Syrian government that there are consequences for this brutal crackdown that has been imposed on the Syrian people.”

Regarding Afghanistan and the fight against terrorism, Clinton said Osama bin Laden’s death sent a message about the will of the international community to bring terrorists to justice. She said the battle against al-Qaida does not end with bin Laden’s death.

“We have to renew our resolve and redouble our efforts not only in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but around the world, because it is especially important that there be no doubt that those who pursue a terrorist agenda, the criminals who indiscriminately murder innocent people, will be brought to justice,” Clinton said.

Clinton said cooperation between the United States and Pakistan in the fight against terror will continue.

“They have helped us put unprecedented pressure on al-Qaida and its leadership. Bin Laden is not the only high leader in al-Qaida who has been removed from the scene thanks to the partnership between the United States and Pakistan,” Clinton said. “And we are committed to supporting the people and the democracy that Pakistan is representing now.”

A reconciliation agreement signed May 4 between Palestinian groups Fatah and Hamas is being studied by the United States, Clinton told reporters.

“We are going to be carefully assessing what this actually means because there are a number of different potential meanings to it, both on paper and in practice,” Clinton said. “We’ve made it very clear that we cannot support any government that consists of Hamas unless and until Hamas adopts the Quartet principles.”

2. Pentagon Report Cites Tangible Progress in Afghan Security (05-03-2011)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Afghan national security forces have made “tangible progress” in halting and reversing the momentum of the Taliban insurgency in a number of areas, a new U.S. Defense Department report says.

The report to Congress — which covers the period from October 1, 2010, to March 31, 2011 — said Afghan national security forces continue to increase in size, quality of operations and capabilities. While progress remains “fragile and reversible,” enough momentum has been

generated in the past six months to establish conditions to begin the transition of security duties to Afghan forces in seven areas this summer, the report said.

“The situation on the ground is fundamentally changing,” a senior defense official said in a Pentagon background briefing in Washington April 29 when the report was released. “And this is something that happens day by day, week by week, month by month, and over the past two years.”

The positive news comes as the United States prepares to reduce some of its almost 100,000 forces in July and hand over security for some districts to Afghan forces. The report said the success comes from a combination of events: the arrival of a surge in U.S. and coalition forces in 2010, establishing a U.S. Army division’s headquarters in a regional command, and the expansion of Afghan security forces.

“The surge in conventional forces and special operations forces, the increased pace and scope of operations, and the expansion of the Afghan local police program and Village Stability Operations have, together, placed unprecedented pressure on the insurgency,” the report said.

“Together, these efforts have driven insurgents out of key population centers in the south, cleared safe havens that the enemy possessed for years, and disrupted its networks and plans,” the report said.

The long-term goal is to transfer full security responsibility for Afghanistan to Afghan control by 2014.

The report said the coalition’s efforts have removed major safe havens from the insurgents’ control, disrupted their leader networks, and removed many weapons stockpiles and tactical supplies left behind at the end of the last fighting season. The surge in coalition forces and expanded operations have allowed the coalition to degrade the insurgency’s capabilities to such a degree that the Taliban have lost influence in key areas across the country, the report added.

3. Fact Sheet: Phased Adaptive Approach to European Missile Defense (05-03-2011)

United States European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) and NATO Missile Defense

On September 17, 2009, President Barack Obama announced the U.S. decision to adopt a new approach to ballistic missile defense in Europe. This plan is called the European Phased Adaptive Approach or EPAA. The President stated:

To put it simply, our new missile defense architecture in Europe will provide stronger, smarter, and swifter defenses of American forces and America’s Allies. It is more comprehensive than the previous program; it deploys capabilities that are proven and cost-effective; and it sustains and builds upon our commitment to protect the U.S. homeland against long-range ballistic missile threats; and it ensures and enhances the protection of all our NATO Allies.

The United States has demonstrated substantial progress in implementing the President’s vision, consisting of four phases.

- Phase 1 (2011 timeframe) – Addresses regional ballistic missile threats to our European Allies and our deployed personnel and their families by deploying a land-based AN/TPY-2 radar and existing Aegis BMD-capable ships equipped with proven SM-3 Block IA interceptors.

In March 2011, the United States announced the deployment of the USS Monterey to the Mediterranean to begin a sustained deployment of Aegis BMD-capable ships in support of the EPAA.

- Phase 2 (2015 timeframe) – After appropriate testing, we will deploy a more capable version of the SM-3 interceptor (Block IB). We will also add a land-based SM-3 ballistic missile defense interceptor site, which Romania has agreed to host, in order to expand the defended area against short- and medium-range missile threats. Negotiations for a basing agreement are well underway and the United States and Romania announced the joint selection of a site in May 2011.
- Phase 3 (2018 timeframe) – After development and testing are complete, we will deploy a more advanced SM-3 interceptor (Block IIA) and add a second land-based SM-3 site, which Poland agreed to host in October 2009, to counter short-, medium-, and intermediate-range missile threats. In July 2010, the United States and Poland signed the Protocol amending the August 2008 Ballistic Missile Defense Agreement to provide the basis for Poland to host the land-based SM-3 site. On April 22, 2011, Polish President Komorowski signed legislation ratifying the Agreement.
- Phase 4 (2020 timeframe) – After development and testing are complete, we will deploy the SM-3 Block IIB interceptor to enhance our ability to counter medium- and intermediate-range missiles and potential future ICBM threats to the United States from the Middle East.
- One of the most important milestones since President Obama's announcement in 2009 was NATO's decision at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010 to develop a missile defense capability whose aim is to protect NATO European populations, territory and forces against the increasing threats posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles. NATO also agreed to expand its current missile defense command, control, and communications capabilities to protect NATO European populations, territory, and forces. Allies at Lisbon welcomed the EPAA as the U.S. national contribution to NATO's missile defense architecture, as well as contributions from other Allies.

Another important milestone was the commitment made during the November 2010 NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Summit for NATO and Russia to explore opportunities for missile defense cooperation. Effective cooperation with Russia could enhance the overall effectiveness and efficiency of our combined territorial missile defenses, and at the same time provide Russia with greater security. As an initial step, NATO and Russia agreed on a joint ballistic missile threat assessment and that the NRC would resume theater missile defense cooperation. The United States and Russia also continue to discuss missile defense cooperation.

For more information on U.S. missile defense policy, please see the Ballistic Missile Defense Review (BMDR).

4. Fact Sheet: U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense Site in Romania (05-03-2011)

United States Ballistic Missile Defense Site at Deveselu Air Base in Romania

The United States and Romania jointly selected the Deveselu Air Base near Caracal, Romania, to host a U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense System which employs the SM-3 interceptor (also referred to

as the “Aegis Ashore System”). The deployment to Romania is anticipated to occur in the 2015 timeframe as part of the second phase of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) – the U.S. national contribution to a NATO missile defense architecture.

The EPAA will provide protection of NATO European territories and populations, and augment protection of the United States, against the increasing threats posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles from the Middle East. At the November 2010 NATO Summit, the Alliance welcomed the EPAA as a U.S. national contribution to the NATO missile defense capability.

Technical Aspects of the United States Ballistic Missile Defense System in Romania

- The site will consist of a radar deckhouse and associated Aegis command, control, and communications suite. Separately, it will house a number of launch modules containing SM-3 interceptors.
- Personnel can live and work safely near the Aegis radar system. The United States has safely operated the Aegis Radar Test site in Moorestown, New Jersey for over 30 years without any danger to people or the environment.
- SM-3 interceptors are for defensive purposes only and have no offensive capability. They carry no explosive warheads of any type, and rely on their kinetic energy to collide with and destroy incoming enemy ballistic missile warheads.
- The Aegis Ashore configuration of the ballistic missile defense system will be thoroughly tested at a specialized test center at the Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF) in Hawaii starting in 2014.
- Proposed Characteristics of the United States Ballistic Missile Defense System in Romania
- The U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense site is approximately 430 acres (175 hectares) and is located within the existing Romanian Air Base at Deveselu.
- An estimated 200 military, government civilians, and support contractors will be required to operate the U.S. facility at the site.
- Potential Debris from Intercept
- SM-3 Interceptors based in Romania will not be used for flight tests, and will be launched only in defense against an actual attack.
- The risk of damage or injury from an intercept and debris are small and pose little threat to people and property. The alternative (allowing a threat warhead to impact its target) likely would result in far more severe consequences.
- Proven Defensive Capabilities
- The Aegis Ashore ballistic missile defense system incorporates decades of reliable and effective operations of the Aegis ship-based system into its design and test program.

- The Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System has been proven effective through repeated testing. Since 2002, the system has been successful in 21 of 25 flight tests with the SM-3 interceptor.
-

5. Obama Calls Death of bin Laden an Act of Justice (05-02-2011)

By Jeff Baron
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama says the death of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden allows the world to tell the families of bin Laden's victims: "Justice has been done."

U.S. forces killed bin Laden in a firefight, part of a raid on his compound in Pakistan early on May 2, Pakistani time. In announcing the death, Obama called bin Laden "a terrorist who's responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent men, women, and children."

Obama recalled the images of September 11, 2001: hijacked planes, the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Virginia, just outside of Washington, and the deaths of nearly 3,000 people. But he said that "the worst images are those that were unseen to the world: the empty seat at the dinner table; children who were forced to grow up without their mother or their father; parents who would never know the feeling of their child's embrace."

On Monday, the president said it was "a good day for America." Speaking at a Medal of Honor ceremony for two soldiers killed in the Korean War, the president made reference to bin Laden: "Our country has kept its commitment to see that justice is done," Obama said. "The world is safer; it is a better place because of the death of Osama bin Laden."

Capturing or killing bin Laden had been a U.S. goal even before the 2001 attacks. He declared war on the United States and its allies in 1996, and al-Qaida was considered responsible for the 1998 bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the 2000 suicide attack against the USS Cole in Yemen. Obama said he made the capture or killing of bin Laden the top priority for the Central Intelligence Agency.

The president said the fight against the Islamist extremist group will continue, but that "the United States is not — and never will be — at war with Islam." "Bin Laden was not a Muslim leader; he was a mass murderer of Muslims," Obama said.

Although the move against bin Laden went ahead without prior word to the Pakistani government, Obama said that Pakistan's cooperation "helped lead us to bin Laden and the compound where he was hiding." The president, who called Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari after the raid, added that Pakistani officials were pleased that bin Laden had been found and killed.

John Brennan, the president's chief counterterrorism adviser, said bin Laden clearly must have had a "support system" in Pakistan to live comfortably there with his family. Brennan said the United States will take up the issue with Pakistani officials.

Senior administration officials offered some details of the early morning May 2 raid on the compound, about 35 miles from Islamabad. It involved two helicopters with members of the U.S.

Navy special forces who entered the large compound, which was thought to house three families: those of bin Laden and two brothers who were his trusted aides. In the gunfight that followed, five people died: bin Laden, the two aides, bin Laden's grown son and one of the aides' wives. No Americans were injured.

At the end of the attack, one of the two American helicopters could not take off and was destroyed. The attack force left with bin Laden's body. They had been in the compound for less than 40 minutes.

U.S. officials said bin Laden's body was positively identified and was treated in accordance with Islamic custom before being buried at sea within 24 hours of the raid.

Obama and the senior officials praised the teamwork and effort that went into the operation against bin Laden: four years ago getting information from captured al-Qaida members identifying an aide who served as a courier for bin Laden, then in August 2010 finding the compound where he and his brother lived. Months more of intelligence-gathering showed that the compound also sheltered "a high-value target," probably bin Laden.

The killing of bin Laden brought praise from U.S. lawmakers of both parties, both for Obama and for the intelligence services and Navy SEALs involved in the operation.

A statement from Senator John McCain of Arizona, Obama's Republican opponent in the 2008 election, said he was "overjoyed" with the news. "The world is a better and more just place now that Osama bin Laden is no longer in it," McCain said. "I hope the families of the victims of the September 11th attacks will sleep easier tonight and every night hence knowing that justice has been done."

The chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Democrat John Kerry of Massachusetts, said in a statement that the 10-year manhunt for bin Laden "was in search of justice, not revenge."

Former presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush also offered statements of praise and congratulations. "This momentous achievement marks a victory for America, for people who seek peace around the world, and for all those who lost loved ones on September 11, 2001," Bush said. Clinton said, "I congratulate the president, the national security team and the members of our armed forces on bringing Osama bin Laden to justice after more than a decade of murderous al-Qaida attacks."

[Obama on Death of Terrorist Osama bin Laden](#) (05-01-2011)

[Clinton: Bin Laden Dead, "Justice Has Been Done"](#) (05-02-2011)

6. U.S. Muslims React to bin Laden's Death, Stand Against Terrorism (05-02-2011)

By M. Scott Bortot
Staff Writer

Washington — In the wake of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden's death at the hands of U.S. forces in Pakistan on May 2, Muslim-American civil society groups say that terrorism's hateful message continues to be irrelevant.

“In light of the widespread democratic protests sweeping the Middle East which have demonstrated the power and effectiveness of peaceful protests to enact political change and realize the aspirations of the people, bin Laden and al-Qaida’s pro-violence messages have been exposed as bankrupt and misguided,” said a statement from the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), a group that encourages Muslims in America to engage in civic life.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), America’s largest Muslim civil liberties organization, said bin Laden has never represented Muslims.

“As we have stated repeatedly since the 9/11 terror attacks, bin Laden never represented Muslims or Islam,” said a CAIR press release. “In fact, in addition to the killing of thousands of Americans, he and al-Qaida caused the deaths of countless Muslims worldwide.”

Salam Al-Marayati, president of MPAC, echoed CAIR’s sentiment on al-Qaida’s culture of violence and said that bin Laden’s senseless acts showed a disregard for humanity.

“His actions and those of al-Qaida have violated the sacred Islamic teachings upholding the sanctity of all human life,” Al-Marayati said. “His acts of senseless terror have been met with moral outrage by Muslims worldwide at every turn in the past decade.”

The Islamic Society of North America, one of the country’s largest Muslim organizations, praised President Obama for his anti-terrorism efforts.

“The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) joins all Americans in thanking President Obama for fulfilling his promise to bring Osama bin Laden, leader of al-Qaida and perpetrator of the 9/11 attacks, to justice,” said an ISNA press release.

Imam Mohamed Magid, president of ISNA, said Americans are standing together against terrorism and in defense of the country’s principles.

“We will turn to each other today, united, and emerge tomorrow with an even stronger resolve to take every action necessary to protect the precious ideals of our nation that bin Laden attempted to destroy on 9/11: peace, tolerance, respect and freedom for all,” Magid said.

The Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, a group advocating Muslim community interests, welcomed President Obama’s statement that America is not targeting Islam during his speech that announced bin Laden’s death.

“We thank President Obama for overseeing this operation and his reiterating that ‘the United States is not — and never will be — at war with Islam,’” said Ahlam Jbara, associate director of the council.

Kiran Ansari, the council’s director of communications, said Muslims in America are optimistic that bin Laden’s death will usher in a new age of understanding.

“We hope that this moment will be the start of a new era of hope, interfaith cooperation and peace,” Ansari said. “We are united as one American family as President Obama said and we hope this is a turning point away from the dark period of the last decade.”

7. Briefing by Senior Officials on Killing of Osama bin Laden (05-02-2011)

MR. VIETOR: Thank you, everyone, for joining us, especially so late. We wanted to get you on the line quickly with some senior administration officials to talk about the operation today regarding Osama bin Laden. And with that I'll turn it over to our first senior administration official.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thanks for joining us, everybody, at this late hour. It's much appreciated. From the outset of the administration, the President has placed the highest priority in protecting the nation from the threat of terrorism. In line with this, we have pursued an intensified, targeted, and global effort to degrade and defeat al Qaeda. Included in this effort has been a relentless set of steps that we've taken to locate and bring Osama bin Laden to justice. Indeed, in the earliest days of the administration, the President formally instructed the intelligence community and his counterterrorism advisors to make the pursuit of Osama bin Laden, as the leader of al Qaeda, as a top priority.

In the beginning of September of last year, the CIA began to work with the President on a set of assessments that led it to believe that in fact it was possible that Osama bin Laden may be located at a compound in Pakistan. By mid-February, through a series of intensive meetings at the White House and with the President, we had determined there was a sound intelligence basis for pursuing this in an aggressive way and developing courses of action to pursue Osama bin Laden at this location.

In the middle of March, the President began a series of National Security Council meetings that he chaired to pursue again the intelligence basis and to develop courses of action to bring justice to Osama bin Laden. Indeed, by my count, the President chaired no fewer than five National Security Council meetings on the topic from the middle of March -- March 14th, March 29th, April 12th, April 19th, and April 28th. And the President gave the final order to pursue the operation that he announced to the nation tonight on the morning -- Friday morning of April 29th.

The President mentioned tonight that the pursuit of Osama bin Laden and the defeat of al Qaeda has been a bipartisan exercise in this nation since September 11, 2001, and indeed, this evening before he spoke to the nation, President Obama did speak to President Bush 43 and President Clinton this evening to review with them the events of today and to preview his statement to the nation tonight.

And with that, I'll turn it over to my colleague to go through some of the details. Thank you.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: As you heard, the President ordered a raid earlier today against an al Qaeda compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Based on intelligence collection analysis, a small U.S. team found Osama bin Laden living in a large home on a secured compound in an affluent suburb of Islamabad. The raid occurred in the early morning hours in Pakistan and accomplished its objective. Osama bin Laden is now no longer a threat to America.

This remarkable achievement could not have happened without persistent effort and careful planning over many years. Our national security professionals did a superb job. They deserve tremendous credit for serving justice to Osama bin Laden.

Bin Laden was a sworn enemy of the United States and a danger to all humanity; a man who called for the murder of any American anywhere on Earth. His death is central to the President's goal of disrupting, dismantling, and ultimately defeating al Qaeda and its violent allies. He was responsible for killing thousands of innocent men and women not only on 9/11, but in the 1998 East Africa embassy bombing, the attack of the USS Cole, and many other acts of brutality.

He was the leader of a violent extremist movement with affiliates across the globe that had taken up arms against the United States and its allies. Bin Laden's most influential role has been to designate the United States as al Qaeda's primary target and to maintain organizational focus on that objective. This strategic objective, which was first made in a 1996 declaration of jihad against Americans, was the cornerstone of bin Laden's message.

Since 9/11, multiple agencies within our intelligence community have worked tirelessly to track down bin Laden, knowing that his removal from al Qaeda would strike a crippling blow to the organization and its militant allies. And last September the President was made aware of a compound in Abbottabad, where a key al Qaeda facilitator appeared to be harboring a high-value target. He received regular intelligence updates, as was just mentioned, on the compound in September, and he directed that action be taken as soon as he concluded that the intelligence case was sufficiently strong. A range of options for achieving the mission were developed, and on Friday he authorized the operation.

Now I'll turn it to my colleagues to go through the intelligence.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thank you. First I want to point out that today's success was a team effort. It was a model of really seamless collaboration across our government. Since 9/11, this is what the American people have expected of us, and today, in this critical operation, we were able to finally deliver.

The operation itself was the culmination of years of careful and highly advanced intelligence work. Officers from the CIA, the NGA, the NSA all worked very hard as a team to analyze and pinpoint this compound. Together they applied their very unique expertise and capabilities to America's most vexing intelligence problem, where to find bin Laden.

When the case had been made that this was a critical target, we began to prepare this mission in conjunction with the U.S. military. In the end, it was the matchless skill and courage of these Americans that secured this triumph for our country and the world. I'm very proud of the entire team that worked on this operation, and am very thankful to the President for the courage that he displayed in making the decision to proceed with this operation.

With that, let me turn to my colleague to give you details on the intelligence background.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thank you. The bottom line of our collection and our analysis was that we had high confidence that the compound harbored a high-value terrorist target. The experts who worked this issue for years assessed that there was a strong probability that the terrorist that was hiding there was Osama bin Laden.

What I'd like to do is walk you through the key points in that intelligence trail that led us to that conclusion. From the time that we first recognized bin Laden as a threat, the CIA gathered leads on individuals in bin Laden's inner circle, including his personal couriers. Detainees in the post-9/11 period flagged for us individuals who may have been providing direct support to bin Laden and his deputy, Zawahiri, after their escape from Afghanistan.

One courier in particular had our constant attention. Detainees gave us his nom de guerre or his nickname and identified him as both a protégé of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of September 11th, and a trusted assistant of Abu Faraj al-Libbi, the former number three of al Qaeda who was captured in 2005.

Detainees also identified this man as one of the few al Qaeda couriers trusted by bin Laden. They indicated he might be living with and protecting bin Laden. But for years, we were unable to identify his true name or his location.

Four years ago, we uncovered his identity, and for operational reasons, I can't go into details about his name or how we identified him, but about two years ago, after months of persistent effort, we identified areas in Pakistan where the courier and his brother operated. Still we were unable to pinpoint exactly where they lived, due to extensive operational security on their part. The fact that they were being so careful reinforced our belief that we were on the right track.

Then in August 2010, we found their residence, a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, a town about 35 miles north of Islamabad. The area is relatively affluent, with lots of retired military. It's also insulated from the natural disasters and terrorist attacks that have afflicted other parts of Pakistan. When we saw the compound where the brothers lived, we were shocked by what we saw -- an extraordinarily unique compound. The compound sits on a large plot of land in an area that was relatively secluded when it was built. It is roughly eight times larger than the other homes in the area.

When the compound was built in 2005, it was on the outskirts of the town center, at the end of a narrow dirt road. In the last six years, some residential homes have been built nearby. The physical security measures of the compound are extraordinary. It has 12- to 18-foot walls topped with barbed wire. Internal wall sections -- internal walls sectioned off different portions of the compound to provide extra privacy. Access to the compound is restricted by two security gates, and the residents of the compound burn their trash, unlike their neighbors, who put the trash out for collection.

The main structure, a three-story building, has few windows facing the outside of the compound. A terrace on the third floor has a seven-foot wall privacy -- has a seven-foot privacy wall.

It's also noteworthy that the property is valued at approximately \$1 million but has no telephone or Internet service connected to it. The brothers had no explainable source of wealth.

Intelligence analysts concluded that this compound was custom built to hide someone of significance. We soon learned that more people were living at the compound than the two brothers and their families. A third family lived there -- one whose size and whose makeup matched the bin Laden family members that we believed most likely to be with Osama bin Laden. Our best assessment, based on a large body of reporting from multiple sources, was that bin Laden was living there with several family members, including his youngest wife.

Everything we saw -- the extremely elaborate operational security, the brothers' background and their behavior, and the location and the design of the compound itself was perfectly consistent with what our experts expected bin Laden's hideout to look like. Keep in mind that two of bin Laden's gatekeepers, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and Abu Faraj al-Libbi, were arrested in the settled areas of Pakistan.

Our analysts looked at this from every angle, considering carefully who other than bin Laden could be at the compound. We conducted red team exercises and other forms of alternative analysis to check our work. No other candidate fit the bill as well as bin Laden did.

So the final conclusion, from an intelligence standpoint, was twofold. We had high confidence that a high-value target was being harbored by the brothers on the compound, and we assessed that there was a strong probability that that person was Osama bin Laden.

Now let me turn it over to my colleague.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thank you. Earlier this afternoon, a small U.S. team conducted a helicopter raid on the compound. Considerable planning helped prepare our operators for this very complex mission. Senior officials have been involved in the decision-making and planning for this operation for months, and briefed the President regularly. My colleague has already mentioned the unusual characteristics of this compound. Each of these, including the high walls, security features, suburban location, and proximity to Islamabad made this an especially dangerous operation.

The men who executed this mission accepted this risk, practiced to minimize those risks, and understood the importance of the target to the national security of the United States.

I know you understand that I can't and won't get into many details of this mission, but I'll share what I can. This operation was a surgical raid by a small team designed to minimize collateral damage and to pose as little risk as possible to non-combatants on the compound or to Pakistani civilians in the neighborhood.

Our team was on the compound for under 40 minutes and did not encounter any local authorities while performing the raid. In addition to Osama bin Laden, three adult males were killed in the raid. We believe two were the couriers and the third was bin Laden's adult son.

There were several women and children at the compound. One woman was killed when she was used as a shield by a male combatant. Two other women were injured.

During the raid, we lost one helicopter due to mechanical failure. The aircraft was destroyed by the crew and the assault force and crew members boarded the remaining aircraft to exit the compound. All non-combatants were moved safely away from the compound before the detonation.

That's all I have at this time. I'll turn it back to my colleague.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We shared our intelligence on this bin Laden compound with no other country, including Pakistan. That was for one reason and one reason alone: We believed it was essential to the security of the operation and our personnel. In fact, only a very small group of people inside our own government knew of this operation in advance.

Shortly after the raid, U.S. officials contacted senior Pakistani leaders to brief them on the intent and the results of the raid. We have also contacted a number of our close allies and partners throughout the world.

Sine 9/11, the United States has made it clear to Pakistan that we would pursue bin Laden wherever he might be. Pakistan has long understood that we are at war with al Qaeda. The United States had a legal and moral obligation to act on the information it had.

And let me emphasize that great care was taken to ensure operational success, minimize the possibility of non-combatant casualties, and to adhere to American and international law in carrying out the mission.

I should note that in the wake of this operation, there may be a heightened threat to the homeland and to U.S. citizens and facilities abroad. Al Qaeda operatives and sympathizers may try to respond violently to avenge bin Laden's death, and other terrorist leaders may try to accelerate their efforts to strike the United States. But the United States is taking every possible precaution to protect Americans here at home and overseas. The State Department has sent guidance to embassies worldwide and a travel advisory has been issued for Pakistan.

And without a doubt, the United States will continue to face terrorist threats. The United States will continue to fight those threats. We have always understood that this fight would be a marathon and not a sprint.

There's also no doubt that the death of Osama bin Laden marks the single greatest victory in the U.S.-led campaign to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda. It is a major and essential step in bringing about al Qaeda's eventual destruction.

Bin Laden was al Qaeda's only (inaudible) commander in its 22-year history, and was largely responsible for the organization's mystique, its attraction among violent jihadists, and its focus on America as a terrorist target. As the only al Qaeda leader whose authority was universally respected, he also maintained his cohesion, and his likely successor, Ayman al-Zawahiri, is far less charismatic and not as well respected within the organization, according to comments from several captured al Qaeda leaders. He probably will have difficulty maintaining the loyalty of bin Laden's largely Gulf Arab followers.

Although al Qaeda may not fragment immediately, the loss of bin Laden puts the group on a path of decline that will be difficult to reverse.

And finally, it's important to note that it is most fitting that bin Laden's death comes at a time of great movement towards freedom and democracy that is sweeping the Arab world. He stood in direct opposition to what the greatest men and women throughout the Middle East and North Africa are risking their lives for: individual rights and human dignity.

MR. VIETOR: With that we're ready to take a couple questions.

Q: One question. You said "a small U.S. team." Were these military personnel, can you say, or non-military?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Can't go into further details at this time; just a small U.S. team.

Q: Good morning. Can you tell us specifically what contact there was with bin Laden at the compound? You referred to someone using a woman as a shield that was not bin Laden. But how was he killed? Where? What occurred at the compound?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: As the President said this evening, bin Laden was killed in a firefight as our operators came onto the compound.

Q: Thank you. Just to go back to what you were talking about with the attacks in response to this operation, are you hearing any specific threats against specific targets?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. But any type of event like this, it is very prudent for us to take measures so that we can ensure that the security measures that we need to institute here and throughout the world are in place. This is just something that we normally would do. We don't have any specific threats at this time related to this. But we are ensuring that every possible precaution is taken in advance.

Q: Yes, hey, how are you doing? My question would be, what was the type of the helicopter that failed? And what was the nature of that mechanical failure?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Can't go into details at this time.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We didn't say it was mechanical.

Q: Was bin Laden involved in firing himself or defending himself? And then any chronology of the raid itself?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: He did resist the assault force. And he was killed in a firefight.

Q: Thank you. Thank you for taking this call. Can you give me a comment on the very fact that Osama bin Laden was just in Islamabad -- and has long been (inaudible) Afghanistan (inaudible) also from India, that Osama bin Laden is hiding somewhere near Islamabad? What does it signify, that? Does it signify any cooperation or any kind of link that he had with establishments in Pakistan?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: As the President said, Pakistani cooperation had assisted in this lead, as we pursued it. So we're continuing to work this issue right now. We are very concerned about -- that he was inside of Pakistan, but this is something that we're going to continue to work with the Pakistani government on.

Q: But the very fact you didn't inform the Pakistani authorities -- did you have any suspicion that if you informed them, the information might lead somewhere?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: An operation like this that is conducted has the utmost operational security attached to it. I said that we had shared this information with no other country, and that a very, very small group of individuals within the United States government was aware of this. That is for operational security purposes.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I would also just add to that that President Obama, over a period of several years now, has repeatedly made it clear that if we had actionable intelligence about Osama bin Laden's whereabouts, we would act. So President Obama has been very clear in delivering that message publicly over a period of years. And that's what led President Obama to order this operation. When he determined that the intelligence was actionable and the intelligence case was sufficient, he gave us high confidence that bin Laden indeed was at the compound.

Q: Thank you. What is going to happen next? And what is the U.S. going to do with bin Laden's body?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We are ensuring that it is handled in accordance with Islamic practice and tradition. This is something that we take very seriously. And so therefore this is being handled in an appropriate manner.

MR. VIETOR: Great, thanks. Just to remind everyone, this call is on background, as senior administration officials. We have time for one more question, and we're going to go to bed.

Q: Do you have a sense of the vintage of the compound and how long bin Laden had been there?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The compound has been in existence for roughly five years, but we don't know how long bin Laden lived there. We assess that the compound was built for the purpose of harboring him. But again, don't know how long he's been there.

MR. VIETOR: Great, thank you all. We'll talk more tomorrow.
